



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Joint News Release

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Idaho site completes demolition of Cold War-era nuclear fuel reprocessing facility

A gravel mound, larger than half a city block and several feet thick, is the only visible feature that remains at the site of a Cold War-era spent nuclear fuel reprocessing facility at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho site. About \$44 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds helped Idaho Cleanup Project crews accelerate the demolition of the facility that during its 40 years of operation recovered more than \$1 billion worth of uranium.

"The ability to retain our highly skilled workforce was a huge contributor to the success of this project," said Idaho Cleanup Project Deputy Manager, Jim Cooper. "It was the focus, innovation, and dedication of the CWI crews that allowed us to take the EM Recovery Act funding and really make a difference in Idaho."

Crews began decontamination work at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center's CPP-601 facility in 2009 by removing asbestos from the interior and exterior shell of the facility, removing contaminated interior duct work and piping, grouting void spaces and preparing the structure for demolition. In late summer 2010, demolition of the outer structure began with debris removal occurring up until the fall. Last year, a concrete grout cap was poured over the area where CPP-601 once stood and this year several feet of gravel were placed over the area.

CPP-601, a 244 x102-foot, six-level structure, was built in 1953 and was used for the dissolution, separation and chemical retrieval of uranium-235 from spent nuclear fuel – essentially a recycling process. The reprocessing mission at INTEC was terminated in 1992, following more than four decades of uranium recovery. Recovered uranium was re-used as fuel for government reactors for both research and defense purposes.

The CPP-601 building housed numerous cells used for processing radioactive materials, with thick, reinforced concrete walls and shielding material, including lead. The cells contained

hundreds of vessels and miles of piping used in the chemical processes to recover uranium from different types of spent fuels.

During its history, CPP-601 processed more than 100 different types of reactor fuels from universities, test reactors, commercial nuclear power plants and Navy vessels.

“This was a technically challenging project complete with contaminated equipment and structures, asbestos as well as numerous other hazards,” said CWI President and CEO Tom Dieter. “I’m proud of our team for mitigating all hazards and completing the facility demolition safely and ahead of schedule.”

The CPP-640 Headend Processing Plant, a 66 x 89-foot structure where fuel dissolution processes took place until 1984, was also demolished.

Demolishing these legacy buildings saves taxpayers thousands of dollars a year in surveillance and maintenance costs, as well as protects workers and the environment.

CH2M-WG Idaho, LLC, (CWI) is a partnership comprised of CH2MHill and the URS Corporation that directs the Idaho Cleanup Project at the Department of Energy’s Idaho Site located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 7-year, \$2.9 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management, focuses on early risk reduction and protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

For more information visit the Idaho Cleanup Project on the Web at <https://idahocleanupproject.com>

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